

# Livable **South** *Downtown*

2005 Advisory Group





City of Seattle

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Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

**Department of Planning and Development**

Diane M. Sugimura, Director

June 29, 2005

Dear Advisory Group Participant:

Welcome to the Livable South Downtown Advisory Group! Thank you for your interest and participation.

Over the years, the City and community have devoted much time and effort to community planning efforts and in support of public and private investments in south downtown neighborhoods. The Livable South Downtown planning project will build on past efforts and expand the discussion about growth and change in South Downtown by focusing on how to better support residential development and an appropriate mix of uses.

Advisory group participants will work with City staff to identify barriers and opportunities for future development throughout South Downtown. Participants will be asked to evaluate possible locations for housing and other uses, and to consider actions that could stimulate the appropriate type and scale of development in the right place. The group will also discuss urban design issues that are key to the success of south downtown. Participants will be asked to provide guidance to City staff on specific land use issues, possible code amendments or zoning decisions and urban design recommendations.

We are dedicated to hearing your perspective. To that end, staff members will record conversations and ask that you review meeting notes for accuracy. We further ask that you take the time to review materials that will be provided prior to each meeting. We would also appreciate your suggestions on ways to present information and engage in a productive dialogue with the larger community.

Again, thank you for your commitment to the future of South Downtown. We are grateful to you for lending your experience and perspective to this effort, and we look forward to working with you throughout the coming weeks and months.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Rahaim".

John Rahaim  
Planning Director

## City of Seattle South Downtown Advisory Group Project Team Roster

### Stakeholder Working Group Facilitators:

- Susan McLain, DPD, (206) 684-0432 [susan.mclain@seattle.gov](mailto:susan.mclain@seattle.gov)
- Gary Johnson, DPD, (206) 615-0787, [gary.johnson@seattle.gov](mailto:gary.johnson@seattle.gov)

### Project Managers:

- John Skelton, Land Use Policy Manager, Department of Planning and Development
- Gordon Clowers, Urban Planner, South Downtown Project co-manager  
(206) 684-8375, [gordon.clowers@seattle.gov](mailto:gordon.clowers@seattle.gov)
- Susan McLain, Urban Planner, South Downtown Project co-manager  
(206) 684-0432, [susan.mclain@seattle.gov](mailto:susan.mclain@seattle.gov)
- Donna King, Administrator (206) 615-0717, [donna.king@seattle.gov](mailto:donna.king@seattle.gov)

### Core Project Team:

- Gary Johnson, Center City Coordinator, DPD
- Amy Lindemuth, Land Use Policy Intern
- Steve Moddemeyer, Senior Strategic Advisor, SPU/ DPD
- Dennis Meier, Senior Urban Planner, DPD
- Robert Scully, Urban Designer, DPD



### Advisory Group Members

Fraser Black	Bo Lam
Steve Bull	Sarah Lewontin
Jerry Chihara	Clyde MacIver
Tuck Eng	Craig Montgomery
Joan Enticknap	Quang Nguyen
Rick Friedhoff	John Odland
Bert Gregory	Katherine Olson
Tom Im	Mike Peringer
William Justen	Tony Scott
Ann Kawasaki	Mimi Sheridan
Chris Koh	Greg Smith
Alan Kurimura	Sunny Speidel
	Catherine Vandenbrink



## Project Outline

### **Livable South Downtown**

A project of the Seattle Department of Planning and Development

#### **Introduction**

The Department of Planning and Development is initiating a planning effort for South Downtown as part of the Mayor's "Center City Strategy." The Center City includes the five downtown neighborhoods and five additional neighborhoods around the Downtown core. The Center City Strategy is meant to enhance Seattle's vibrant urban core neighborhoods, increase housing options, encourage pedestrian travel and attract businesses that serve area residents, employees and visitors.

The South Downtown planning project will examine growth and planning issues specific to the following areas of the city:

- the Pioneer Square neighborhood;
- the Chinatown/International District neighborhood (including the Little Saigon area east of Interstate 5); and
- the stadium area and areas east immediately south of Dearborn .

#### **Project Goals and Objectives**

The overall goal of the South Downtown Project is to help stimulate housing and related development in South Downtown consistent with the Mayor's vision of fostering vibrant communities where distinct neighborhoods are knit together in the context of the broader Center City growth strategy. Several specific goals and objectives are also identified for this project as follows:

##### **Goals**

- Stimulate housing and jobs through zoning and land use decisions
- Respect neighborhood character and neighborhood plans
- Promote an integrated mix of uses
- Support quality connections between neighborhood areas and downtown as a whole
- Encourage economic vitality and environmental sustainability
- Accommodate regional services and ensure they respect the goals of the local community

##### **Specific Objectives**

- Evaluate zoning opportunities and constraints particularly in regard to achieving more housing and jobs
- Identify the desired character of areas currently lacking clear development direction
- Recommend and implement City land use actions to support an emerging residential/employment community
- Consider opportunities for sustainable practices in future development
- Recommend public and private investments that would contribute to a well-balanced community in South Downtown

## Project Outline

### Origins of the Project

The South Downtown Project was inspired by the area's neighborhood plans and their expression of community interest in balancing the regional services present in the area with a strong residential and employment base. A vision for the area, published by the Seattle Times in 2003, presented a picture of the South Downtown area bolstered by new investments and housing development.

The Mayor directed DPD to undertake a planning effort to evaluate issues and opportunities relating to future growth in south downtown. The City Council included \$200,000 in funding for the project in the 2005 adopted budget. City funds will be used to staff an advisory group process and initial staff research and analysis. Additional contributions of \$200,000 are anticipated from private sources to fund any necessary environmental analysis that results from the conclusions reached during the study phase of the process.

### Project Schedule

Between June and October of this year, DPD staff will work with members of the community to identify key land use and development issues. Staff anticipate that many issues affecting other City departments will emerge. The City's Center City Coordinator will coordinate with other departments to understand and address these concerns.

By the end of 2005, DPD staff will release recommendations to address key land use and development issues affecting the south downtown area. DPD staff will brief the Mayor on the recommendations and begin to formulate legislation and possibly initiate an environmental review process at that time.

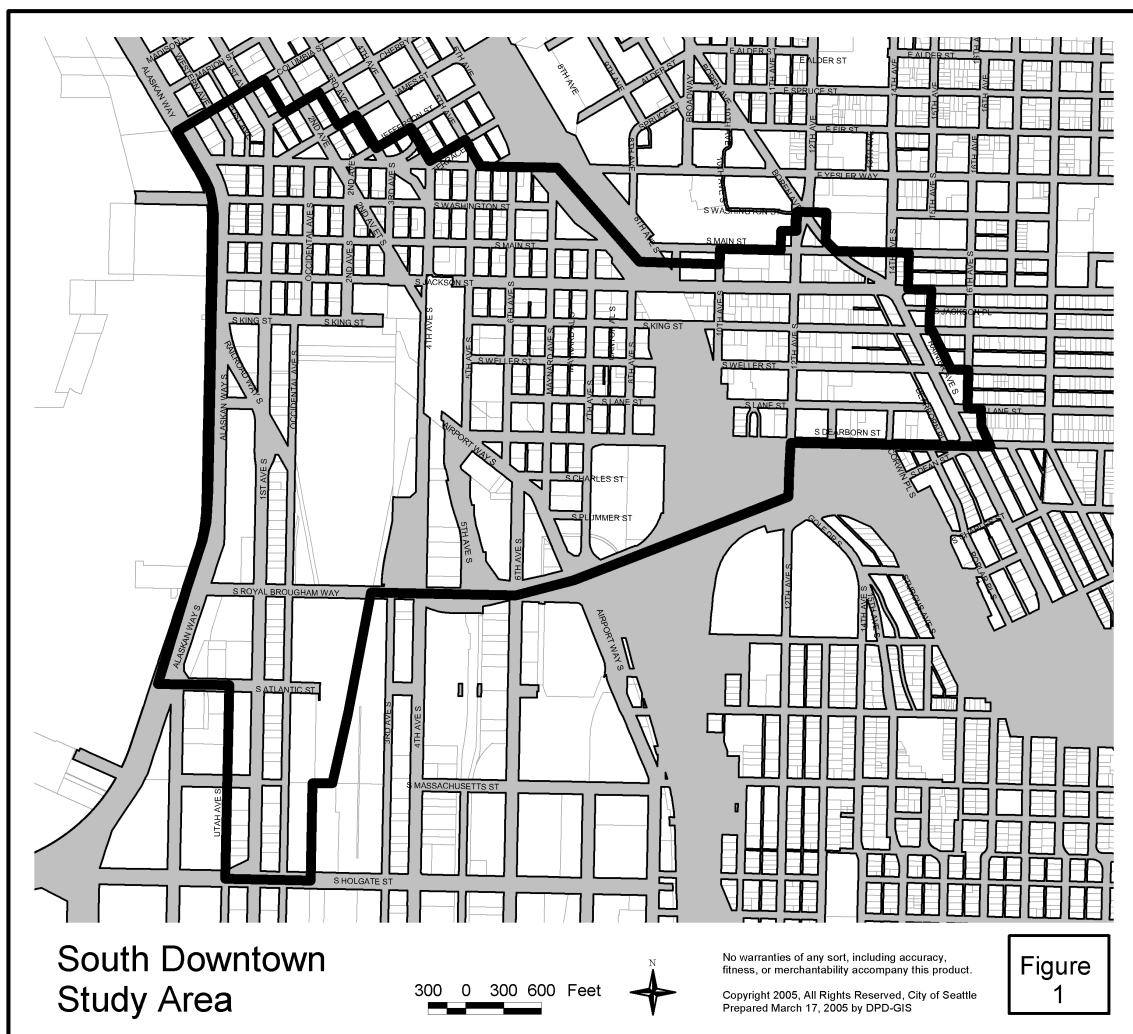
<u>June – October 2005</u> Study Phase	<u>October – 2006</u> Implementation Phase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Area background study</li><li>▪ Advisory group meetings (meetings 1-8)</li><li>▪ Community open houses to communicate findings and invite commentary</li><li>▪ Initiation of IDT to communicate/ coordinate with various City departments</li><li>▪ Initial zoning and land use staff analysis</li><li>▪ Economic Analysis</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Presentation of zoning and land use staff analysis</li><li>▪ Possible final advisory group meeting to review staff recommendations</li><li>▪ Possible Actions:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Comprehensive Plan amendment</li><li>- legislative rezones</li><li>- Land Use Code text amendments</li><li>- environmental analysis</li><li>- recommendations for further study of specific issues.</li></ul></li><li>▪ Council hearings and decision-making</li></ul>

## Project Outline

### Advisory Group Process

Together with the Mayor's office, DPD staff identified approximately twenty five people with diverse interests in the South Downtown area. Letters of invitation to serve on the advisory committee have been sent; the first of eight advisory group meetings is scheduled in June. Two community open house events are scheduled: the first after meeting 5, and the second as staff are developing specific recommendations near the end of the advisory group process.

Information gleaned from the advisory group process will influence staff recommendations to the Mayor and Council. The process is meant to be an important element of the dialogue between City decision-makers, staff, and members of the community. City staff will document conversations between advisory group participants, presenters and staff. Staff will then incorporate opinions of group members into both background materials and recommendations to the Mayor and Council.



## The Role of the Advisory Group

Our goal for the South Downtown Advisory Group is to bring together a broad spectrum of people to examine priority land use issues affecting south downtown, with an emphasis on encouraging and supporting a mixed-use community in the area. Information gleaned from the advisory group process will influence staff recommendations to the Mayor and Council.

Advisory group members represent the diversity of interests in the south downtown area. However, individual members of the group are assumed to represent their own opinions as they participate in this process. The group as a whole will not create independent recommendations. Rather, City staff will record conversations between advisory group participants, presenters and staff. Staff will then incorporate ideas and positions of group members into both background materials and recommendations to the Mayor and Council. Responsibilities of advisory group participants include:

- Advising the Department of Planning and Development on issues relating to policies and actions that support the neighborhoods and the south downtown area as a whole;
- Reviewing staff analysis of existing and future conditions;
- Attending all advisory group meetings and, if possible, community open house events;
- Commenting on staff final recommendations to the Council and Mayor.

Policy guidance for future growth and change is largely defined by the Comprehensive Plan's policies and growth targets, the area's zoning, neighborhood plans, and the collective actions of City departments and other agencies. Of these, zoning regulations have the most direct effect in shaping the use and appearance of future physical development. The south downtown planning process is an opportunity to re-examine expectations about future growth and development, and make adjustments to land use/zoning regulations and policies.

Issues and elements that will be included as part of the advisory group discussions are:

- Current conditions relating to growth, development activity and community objectives
- Possible barriers to attracting desirable types of growth, and identification of areas where specific types of development would be desirable
- Neighborhood character and linkages between neighborhood centers
- Quality of public spaces
- Policy and regulatory alternatives
- Issues of sustainability within the south downtown community

## South Downtown Advisory Group Working Rules

This is a set of informal working rules that guide the way advisory group members work together in an environment of mutual respect and trust.

1. The South Downtown Advisory Group serves in an advisory capacity to city staff.
2. This process is not governed by the Seattle Ethics Code because it was not established by City ordinance. However, if you feel that you might have a conflict of interest by serving on the advisory group, you should contact the City of Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission at 684-8500.
3. Members of the advisory group are not expected to represent any other group, organization, or agency but themselves. This advisory group in no way restricts individual members, in their capacity as citizens, from interacting with elected officials, the media or community organizations.
4. Persons who are not members of the advisory group may attend meetings as observers. They may be given opportunity to speak during the public comment portion of each meeting.
5. Staff will provide any materials and information at the request of the group as a whole.
6. Members are expected to review materials and prepare for each meeting.
7. Members who cannot fulfill their duties on the advisory group should consider not participating. Members who leave the advisory group are asked to notify staff in writing.
8. Members of the advisory group have the right to be treated in a civil and respectful manner.
9. Members are encouraged to direct questions or concerns about the advisory group and its members to staff.

**DRAFT AGENDA WORKPLAN**  
(as of August 4, 2005)  
**South Downtown Advisory Group**

Event	Likely Topics, Discussions and Presentations
<b>Advisory Group Meeting #1</b> Thursday July 7 4:30 – 6:40 p.m. City Hall, Room L280 (Boards and Commissions Meeting Room)	<b>Setting expectations, providing basic information</b>  Staff will provide an overview of the process: role of the advisory group, ground rules, agendas. Additional discussion: scope of the project, relationship to other City planning efforts, perceived trends in the area.
<b>Advisory Group Meeting #2</b> Wednesday July 13 4:30 – 7:00 pm Key Tower Room 4050/60	<b>Sub-Area Discussion #1: Pioneer Square and Stadium areas</b>  Discussion: perceptions and expectations about growth and land use in specific neighborhood vicinities; future neighborhood character of sub-areas.
<b>Advisory Group Meeting #3</b> Wednesday July 27 4:30 – 7:00 pm City Hall, Room L280 (Boards and Commissions Meeting Room)	<b>Sub-Area Discussion #2: Chinatown/ I.D., Little Saigon, Goodwill site, South Dearborn area.</b>  Discussion: perceptions and expectations about growth and land use in specific neighborhood vicinities; future neighborhood character of sub-areas.
<b>Advisory Group Meeting #4</b> Wednesday August 10 4:30 – 7:00 pm Key Tower Room 4050/60	<b>Connections and Public Spaces</b>  Discussion: mobility and open space issues that connect places and move people throughout the area.
<b>Advisory Group Meeting #5</b> Thursday August 25 4:30 – 7:00 p.m. Key Tower Room 4050/60	<b>Sustainability</b>  Discussion: ideas for sustainability, and how these ideas and practices can be applied to South Downtown.

Continued on following page.



Draft Agenda Workplan, continued

Event	Likely Topics, Discussions and Presentations
<b>Advisory Group Meeting #6</b> Thursday September 15 4:30 – 7:00 p.m. Key Tower Room 4050/60	<b>Zoning</b>  Discussion: existing zoning, neighborhood goals, and how future zoning can support the South Downtown community. Discussions about zoning may continue into Meeting #7.
<b>Community Open House #1</b> Monday September 19 Chinatown/ I.D. Community Center: 719 8 <sup>th</sup> Ave S, (on S. Dearborn Street and 8 <sup>th</sup> Avenue S.)	<b>City Departments Respond to South Downtown</b>  DPD staff will share what they have heard from advisory group participants thus far. Various City departments will present information about activities in South Downtown. The South Downtown Interdepartmental Team will present information about their work program. Featured speakers: Mayor Greg Nickels, DPD Director Diane Sugimura, DPD Planning Director John Rahaim.
<b>Advisory Group Meeting #7</b> Thursday October 6 4:30 – 7:00 p.m. Key Tower Room 4050/60	<b>Putting it all together</b>  Staff report-back to advisors about issues and themes identified through the advisory group process. Discussion will focus on benefits or drawbacks of various approaches to land use decisions in South Downtown. Possible continuation of zoning discussion.
<b>Advisory Group Meeting #8</b> Thursday October 20 4:30 – 7:00 p.m. Key Tower Room 4050/60	<b>Identifying Preferred Strategies</b>  Discussion of possible land use and zoning strategies and alternative recommendations to the Mayor.
<b>Community Open House #2</b> Date to be determined	<b>DPD Reports to the Community</b>  DPD will present key findings from the study of south downtown. Staff will request community response to concept-level strategies.

## How to Find the Meetings

### Boards and Commissions Meeting Room

The Boards and Commissions meeting room is located at City Hall, 600 Fourth Avenue in downtown Seattle. City Hall can also be accessed through its entrance on Fifth Avenue. City Hall Block is located between 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenues, and between James and Cherry Streets. Find the Boards and Commissions meeting room by taking the elevator to Level L2 and proceeding to the end of the hall.

### Conference Room 4050/60 of Key Tower

Room 4050/60 is located on the 40<sup>th</sup> floor of Key Tower at 700 Fifth Avenue—between Fifth and Sixth Avenues, and between Cherry and Columbia Streets. Find the conference room by taking the express elevator to the 40<sup>th</sup> floor.

### Where to Find Parking

Public parking is located at the SeaPark garage between Fifth and Sixth Avenues on James Street. Meter parking is also available curb-side, and is free after 6:00 p.m.